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ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM
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MEMORANDUM

To: Republican Members

From: Republican Committee Staff

**Re: March 23, 2009, Information Policy, Census and National Archives
Subcommittee Hearing on “Census 2010: Assessing the Bureau’s
Strategy for Reducing the Undercount of Hard-to-Count Populations”**

This memorandum supplements the Majority memorandum. On **Monday, March 23, 2009 at 10:00 am** in **Room 2154** of the **Rayburn House Office Building**, the Information Policy, Census and National Archives Subcommittee will conduct a Hearing entitled “Census 2010: Assessing the Bureau’s Strategy for Reducing the Undercount of Hard-to-Count Populations.” According to the Majority, the hearing will examine the Census Bureau’s strategies for the 2010 Regional Partnership Program; how the communications plan will decrease the undercount and increase the mail response rate of hard-to-count communities; and whether the messaging will generate community support for the Census. The hearing is a follow-up to the Subcommittee’s July 10, 2008 hearing on the Integrated Communications Campaign.

The Census Bureau’s Regional Partnership Program and advertising plan are part of an Integrated Communications Campaign that will prove important in reducing the undercount, reaching hard-to-count communities and achieving a “full count” 2010 Census. Reaching these communities is not only important, but required by the U.S. Constitution. A full count Census – an actual enumeration – is specifically and firmly rooted in Article I of the U.S. Constitution.¹

¹ U.S. Constitution, Article I Section 2

In order to achieve an a full count Census, it is imperative that the outreach programs the Bureau implements in the run-up to the 2010 decennial, such as the Integrated Communications Campaign, be supported, funded, and ultimately, successful.

The Partnership Program in 2000 involved over 140,000 organizations and for the 2010 decennial, the Bureau has partnered with over 10,000 organizations and hired over 800 partnership staff thus far. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 includes \$1 billion in additional funding for the Bureau to hire additional personnel, provide required training, increase targeted media purchases, and improve management of other operational and programmatic risks. At least \$250 million of that stimulus funding was specifically directed by Congress for the Partnership Program and outreach to traditional hard-to-enumerate communities. In order for such a large endeavor to succeed, rigorous oversight and transparency are vital. Accountability in the spending of these funds is paramount.

Threatening the oversight, transparency and accountability at the Bureau for the 2010 Census are current reports about the involvement of ACORN.

According to recent press reports, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) signed on as a national partner with the U.S. Census Bureau in February 2009 to assist with the recruitment of the 1.4 million temporary workers needed to go door-to-door to count every person in the United States -- currently believed to be more than 306 million people.² During recent election cycles, employees of ACORN have been indicted on charges of voter fraud.³

As representatives of the Census Bureau's Field Division and Regional Offices have been invited as witnesses, this hearing presents an opportunity for the Census Bureau to describe the quality control measures it plans to implement during the hiring of field workers and enumerators and the field work process in general. As transparency and accountability are the Committee's responsibility, the quality control processes the Bureau will or will not have in place are relevant both to the Committee's mandate generally and this Subcommittee hearing specifically.

High response rates to the initial census form mail out and to the Non-Response Follow-Up Program are vitally important to the success of a full count census. It is important that the Census Bureau has solid cooperative agreements and contracts that clearly and explicitly lay out where the money is being spent. It will be important to ensure that contracts are awarded via a competitive process -- not doled out in the form of grants. It is also important that the Bureau establish proper metrics to monitor performance. Just as is the case with the Troubled Asset Relief Program and Stimulus Package, the Bureau needs to make sure that money is not being spent on high salaries and expenses unrelated to outreach or increasing the accuracy of the actual enumeration.

² Foxnews.com, 3/18/09

³ KMBC-TV, Kansas City web site, accessed 3/19/09

As the Majority points out, this hearing will give the Bureau an opportunity to provide details regarding its plans to allocate funds. Additionally, however, this hearing will provide an opportunity for the Bureau to discuss its efforts to prevent waste, fraud and abuse in spending stimulus and other funds in its efforts to count every single person in the U.S. once, only once and in the right place on Census Day 2010.

Witnesses – The following witnesses have been invited to testify:

Panel 1 (of 1)

For the Census Bureau

Mr. Thomas L. Mesenbourg
Acting Director

Mr. Lester A. Farthing
NY Regional Director

Mr. Tim Olson
Assistant Division Chief of Partnership,
Field Division

Mr. David Drabkin
Acting Chief Acquisition Officer
U.S. General Services Administration

For GAO

Mr. Robert Goldenkoff
Director, Strategic Issues

For the City of New York

Ms. Stacey Cumberbatch
City Census Coordinator

For DRAFTFCB

Jeff Tarakajian
Executive Vice President

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